

Message Text

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ACTION IO-03

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NEA-07 DEAE-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00

NSC-10 SSO-00 USIE-00 EUR-10 EA-13 OIC-01 AGR-03

DODE-00 AID-10 IGA-01 L-02 JUSE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 OMB-01 SCI-03 SY-02 TRSE-00 IOE-00

DRC-01 /093 W

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O R 141700Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9712

USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY KARACHI

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

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LIMDIS

E.O: 11652; N/A

TAGS: SNAR, IN

SUBJECT: US VIEWS ON ITEM 9 OF CND AGENDA: SUPPLY OF OPIATES
FOR MEDICAL PURPOSES

SUMMARY: IN LENGTHY BUT AMICABLE DISCUSSION OF USG PROPOSALS
FOR CND MEETING, GOI OFFICIALS STATED THAT GOI COULD NOT AGREE
TO A DECISION TO MOVE TOWARDS POPPY STRAW PROCESSING AS A REPLACE-
MENT FOR INCISING. THEY EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT POPPY STRAW
WOULD INCREASE YIELDS OR IMPROVE ENFORCEMENT AND DID NOT BELIEVE
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THAT IT SUITED INDIAN CONDITIONS. THE GOI WISHES TO WORK

WITH THE USG AT THE CND MEETING AND ELSEWHERE AND SUPPORTS
JOINT AND UN SPONSORED RESEARCH INTO ALL ASPECTS OF OPIUM
PRODUCTION SITUATION. GOI EXPRESSED NO CONCERN ABOUT USG DECISION
TO GROW POPPIES FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES. END SUMMARY

1. CHARGE AND ECON COUNSELOR MET WITH JASJIT SINGH (CHARIMAN
OF CENTRAL BOARD OF EXCISE AND CUSTOMS, MINISTRY OF FINANCE),
MEA JOINT SECRETARY KRISHNAN, NARCOTICS COMMISSIONER SONALKAR,
DIRECTOR OF INSPECTION CHAWLA AND OTHER OFFICIALS TO REVIEW
USG AND GOI POSITIONS AT CND MEETING. SINGH WILL HEAD GOI
DELEGATION TO CND AND CHAWLA AND SONALKAR WILL BE DELEGATION
MEMBERS.

2. IN VIEW OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GOI'S POSITION AT THE CCND
MEETING, THE FOLLOWING IS AN ATTEMPT TO SET OUT IN SOME DETAIL
INDIAN VIEWS. EMBASSY COMMENT WILL FOLLOW BY SEPTTEL.

3. AFTER REVIEWING THE USG POSITION IN DETAIL AS STATED IN THE
REFTEL, I STRESSED TWO POINTS. FIRST, WE WERE ADVANCING A POSITION
THAT RESULTED IN INDIA BEING THE SOLE LICIT PRODUCER OF OPIUM
FOR EXPORT. THIS WAS BEING DONE IN LIGHT OF THE USG'S APPRECIATION
OF THE WILLINGNESS OF GOI TO MAKE ADEQUATE SUPPLIES OF OPIUM
AVAILABLE AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INDIA'S ENFORCEMENT SYSTEM.
SECOND, WE BELIEVED THAT THE POPPY STRAW APPROACH (MECHANICAL
HARVESTING OF UNINCISED POPPY STRAW) WAS MOST EFFECTIVE IN
INCREASING YIELD FROM LIMITED ACREAGE AND IN MINIMIZING ILLICIT
LEAKAGE. WE INTENDED TO PURSUE AN ACTIVE RESEARCH PROGRAM
AND HOPED TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE GOI IN THIS REGARD. WE
HAD NO INTENTION OF ENTERING INTO COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION OF OPIUM.

4. JASJIT SINGH EXPRESSED SOME SURPRISE AT CERTAIN ASPECTS
OF THE USG POSITION, PARTICULARLY THE EMPHASIS ON ACCEPTING AT
THIS TIME A GOAL OF A SWITCH TO POPPY STRAW. HE QUESTIONED WHETHER
THIS WOULD INCREASE PRODUCTION OR EASE ENFORCEMENT PROBLEMS AND
WHETHER SUCH AN APPROVAL SUITED THE SOCIAL-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS
OF INDIA.

5. WITH RESPECT TO YIELD BE NOTED THAT THE 22ND SESSION
OF THE CND HAD FOUND THAT POPPY STRAW PROCESSING YIELDED CONSIDER-
ABLY LESS OPIUM/MORPHINE THAN THE INCISION METHOD. THE ESTIMATE
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AT THAT TIME WAS THAT A TWO AND ONE HALF FOLD INCREASE IN
ACAREAGE WOULD BE REQUIRED TO YIELD THE SAME OUTPUT IF THERE
WERE A SWITCH TO POPPY STRAW. THE GOI WAS UNAWARE OF ANY NEW
TECHNOLOGY THAT WOULD CHANGE THESE CONCLUSIONS. HE NOTED
THAT EASTERN EUROPEAN GROWING WAS SUBSTANTIALLY DIFFERENT
AND THE US HAD NO EXPERIENCE IN THIS FIELD.

6. SINGH ALSO QUESTIONED THE ALLEGED ENFORCEMENT ADVANTAGES

OF POPPPY STRAW. UNDER THE PRESENT SYSTEM THE GOI COULD ESTIMATE THE OPIUM LIKELY TO BE AVAILABLE FROM A GIVEN FIELD AND TO TAKE ACTION IF THIS YIELD WERE NOT REALIZED. WITH IPGH STRAW IT WOULD BE EASY FOR PERSONS TO SECRETLY LANCE THE POPPIES DURING THE GROWING SEASON AND THERE WOULD BE NO WAY TO KNOW WHETHER THIS HAD BEEN DONE. LANCING MARKS WOULD BE OBLITERATED BY THE TRADITIONAL BREAKING OF THE OPPPY HEAD FOR SEED REMOVAL. IT WAS SIMPLY IMPOSSIBLE TO PREVENT ILLICIT ENTRY INTO 250,000 SMALL AND SCATTERED HOLDNGS AND THE FARMER COULD NOT BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE.

7. FINALLY, HE QUESTIONED THE APPROPRIATENESS OF SWITCHING TO POPPY STRAW IN LIGHT OF INDIA'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION. MANY SMALL AND SCATTERED FIELDS DID NOT LEND THEMSELVES TO MECHANIZATION. HE ESTIMATED THAT 20,000 FREIGHT CARS WOULD BE REQUIRED TO MOVE THE POPPY STRAW AND STORAGE FACILITIES WOULD BE REQUIRED. MOREOVER, ONSET OF THE RAINY SEASON COULD ENDANGER THE HARVESTING OF THE CROP UNDER THE POPPY STRAW PROCESS.

8. DESPITE ALL OF THESE REMARKS, SINGH REITERATED THAT THE GOI REALIZED THAT WORLD DEMAND FOR OPIUM WAS INCREASING AND THAT THERE WAS A SIGNIFICANT GAP BETWEEN PRODUCTION AND DEMAND. BASED ON PURCHASE REQUESTS MADE TO THE GOI, THE GOI BELIEVED THAT THERE WAS A SHORTAGE OF 400 TONS OF OPIUM. WHILE GOI EXPECTED TO INCREASE EXPORTS TO 950 - 1000 TONS IN THE CURRENT YEAR THERE WAS CLEARLY ADEQUATE TO MEET DEMAND. IF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AGREED THAT LARGER PRODUCTION WAS REQUIRED THE GOI WOULD ATTEMPT TO INCREASE PRODUCTION WHILE MAINTAINING EFFECTIVE CONTROLS.

9. THE GOI WAS LOOKING INTO IMPROVED AGRICULTURAL METHODS TO INCREASE MORPHINE YIELD. IT ALSO WISHED TO INCREASE PRODUCTION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BY PROCESSING STRAW OF ALREADY LANCED PAPPIES. IT WOULD WELCOME JOI*T RESEARCH OR UN ASSISTANCE IN THESE REGARDS. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, SINGH ADDED THAT PRIVATE CAPITAL WAS NOT SOUGHT AND ALL PROCESSING PLANTS WOULD REMAIN IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR. THE GOI WOULD, HOWEVER, WELCOME FOREIGN KNOW HOW.

10. SINGH EXPRESSED SURPRISE AT OUR CITING OF 60,000 HECTARES FOR INDIAN PRODUCTION. PRESENT LEVELS WERE 52,000 HECTARES AND THE GOI HAD NOT DECIDED WHAT ACREAGE INCREASE WOULD BE COMPATABLE WITH ENFORCEMENT REQUIREMENTS.

11. SINGH SUMMED UP BY STATING THAT HE FAILED TO UNDERSTAND THE REASON FOR THE USG DESIRE TO PUSH FOR POPPY STRAWS AS THE

SOLE SOURCE OF OPIUM. THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE THAT IT WOULD

INCREASE YIELD OR IMPROVE ENFORCEMENT. MOREOVER IT DID NOT
FIT INDIA'S SITUATION. I REPLIED THAT I WAS N
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